



## **OFFICER OF THE YEAR 2014**

The Bristol Police Department Awards Committee has selected *Officer Peter Sassu* as Officer of the Year 2014.

Often when we think of heroic police officers, we envision officers who are rushing into the line of fire to protect and serve those in crisis. However, there is a quiet heroism to the work that certain Police Officers do on a daily basis. Today, we honor the heroism of School Resource Officer (SRO) Peter Sassu.

Officer Peter Sassu has been a member of the Bristol Police Department since 1992. From the beginning he displayed all of the characteristics necessary to be a professional and effective officer. His calm and reassuring demeanor is immediately apparent to those who come into contact with him. In 2007 Officer Sassu interviewed for the position of School Resource Officer at Bristol Eastern High School. Upon being selected, he immersed himself in the lives of the students there. He was present at sporting events, he was available to the staff and most importantly; Officer Peter Sassu was soon welcomed into the hearts and minds of the students he served. They saw him not only as a police officer to respect, but the very person he was supposed to be — a trusted resource for them to turn to in times of crises.

Officer Sassu isn't saving lives by running through alleyways, chasing down the bad guys and participating in shootouts as police heroes are often depicted in television and film. Rather, he saves lives every day by participating fully in the lives of students. Officer Sassu shows students that there is another way to live than perhaps the life they've been exposed to. Through the relationships he has built with students, he shows them the possibilities for their futures. Officer Sassu has saved lives by being the one adult in some of the students' lives in whom they could confide about their problems. He has saved lives by being the one person who has heard their cries for help when they wanted to harm themselves or when they were being abused by people



in their own homes. Officer Sassu has saved lives by ensuring students have not gone hungry. For example; while working at Bristol Eastern, Officer Peter Sassu became aware that many students each day would be at lunch and not eat. Being troubled by this, Officer Sassu instituted a program called "PETE'S POCKET". By doing this, he could help many students who did not qualify for free or reduced lunch get one. Some Board of Education members learned of what he was doing and started a fund raiser to offset his costs. This act by Officer Sassu again demonstrates his initiative to help those in need and he asks for nothing in return. Anyone who witnesses his work with students knows that his work as an SRO is not solely about the work of keeping students safe, it is about contributing to a community and city he deeply cares about and believes in.

Officer Pater Sassu represents the Bristol Police Department with distinction and professionalism on a daily basis as well as during parades and funerals as an Honor Guard member. He is involved in the Roberto Clemente Baseball Program on Davis Drive as well as the departments' Basketball League at the Boy's and Girl's Club. Through his work with the Bristol Gladiators, to the summer leagues of bowling and baseball, to his participation in many Cambridge Park events, Officer Peter Sassu is a family member, one who exhibits the traits we want all students to aspire to: positive, committed, patriotic, loyal, and service oriented.

If one were to consider that Officer Sassu interacts with 1200 students each year in his work at the high school. Adding to that number an additional 300 students each year he works, he has impacted thousands of students' lives.

Officer Sassu has worked diligently with school officials to ensure that the school environment is safe; collaborating on the most effective ways to respond to threats as they occur. Thankfully, Officer Sassu has never had to physically stop an imminent, violent threat to the school, however, there is no doubt that he would respond appropriately putting the lives of the students before his.

For his actions, which reflect credit upon the Bristol Police Department, Officer Peter Sassu is hereby awarded the **Officer of the Year (2014) Award.**

